

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3500

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 1391

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E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS : OVIP (MIDDENDORF, WILLIAM J.)

SUBJECT : PROPOSED TRAVEL OF SECRETARY OF NAVY

REF: STATE 228297

1. THERE HAVE BEEN NO HIGH LEVEL VISITS TO BAHRAIN DURING THE PAST CALENDAR YEAR--EITHER DOD OR REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER BUREAUCRACIES.

2. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, OUR OUTSTANDING BILATERAL PROBLEM WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF BAHRAIN IS THE QUESTION OF THE FUTURE OF THE MIDDLE EAST FORCE HERE. WE ARE PRESENTLY IN THE VERY UNSATISFACTORY SITUATION OF NOT HAVING A UNIFIED USG POLICY IN REGARD TO POSSIBLE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE BAHRAINIS OVER THE TENURE OF MIDEASTFOR BEYOND THE CURRENT DEADLINE, WHICH IS JUNE 30, 1977. AS A GOVERNMENT WE HAVE FOUND OURSELVES UNABLE TO RESPOND TO AN INITIATIVE OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF BAHRAIN THAT HE VISIT WASHINGTON THIS MONTH TO NEGOTIATE THE "MODERNIZATION" OF THE BAHRAIN DEFENSE FORCE AND THE CONTINUATION OF MIDDLE EAST FORCE HOME PORT FACILITIES IN BAHRAIN.

3. IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CONTINUING DISARRAY INSIDE THE USG, THIS EMBASSY IS OF THE OPINION THAT A VISIT BY THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY WOULD NOT BE USEFUL. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, BY LATE OCTOBER/ EARLY NOVEMBER, BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS ARE WELL ON TRACK, REFLECTING A UNIFIED USG REGARDING MIDEASTFOR, THEN WE WOULD SEE THE

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VISIT IN A DIFFERENT, FAVORABLE, LIGHT.

4. TO SUM UP, THEN, EMBASSY VIEW IS DEPENDENT TO A VERY LARGE EXTENT ON THE STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GOB ON THE QUESTION OF THE CONTINUED TENURE OF THE NAVY IN BAHRAIN AT THAT TIME. WE WOULD CLEARLY LIKE TO REVIEW THE QUESTION AGAIN, PERHAPS AROUND THE FIRST WEEK OF OCTOBER.

5. FYI: IT IS PROBABLE THAT THE AMIR OF BAHRAIN WILL BE ON HOLIDAY DURING THE TIME IN QUESTION. THIS FACT WOULD NOT PRECLUDE A VISIT BY THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY BUT IT WOULD MAKE IT LESS USEFUL THAN IT WOULD BE OTHERWISE.
BURLEIGH

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